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For further information about this booklet contact Charles Hobbs, editor, News Division, Office of Public Affairs, Room 406-A, U.S Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. 20250 or call (202) 720-4026.

Testimony

Release No. 0238.93

by
Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy
before the
Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries
United States House of Representatives

How To Improve the Nation's Efforts To Conserve Our Biological Resources and Important Habitats and Ecosystems

April 1, 1993

MR. CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE SUBCOMMITTEE:

I welcome this opportunity to appear before you today along with my colleagues and friends Secretary Babbitt and Administrator Browner to give you my vision of the role the Department of Agriculture will play as the Clinton Administration charts a new course in our efforts to protect and conserve our precious natural resources.

It is my intent to ensure that USDA-works with the Department of the Interior and the Environmental Protection Agency to conserve biodiversity. We have learned that efforts to protect the Northern Spotted Owl and old-growth ecosystems were greatly complicated because different Federal agencies took different, and sometimes, conflicting positions on management strategies. The President has clearly stated that this lack of policy coordination must end. We at USDA are committed to that purpose. A good example of this approach is President Clinton's forestry conference, in which our three organizations will be participating tomorrow in Portland.

Today, I would like to discuss the role that USDA can and will play in promoting conservation and stewardship of the forest, range, and croplands of the United States, with particular focus on our role in maintaining biodiversity.

I believe USDA can play a unique and critical role in the conservation of biological diversity. The Forest Service manages 191 million acres of forests, rangelands, and grasslands in the National Forest System. Together with the Department of the Interior, we serve as our Nation's ecological "bank." Just as our society is strengthened and made rich by the diversity of our citizens, so it is with our natural environment. A wide diversity of plant and animal species thriving in their natural habitat is an indication of a strong and healthy environment.

In recent years, the concept of biodiversity has come to the forefront as one of the most important issues in natural resource management. Although there are many different thoughts on what biodiversity is, it is generally concluded that biodiversity is maximized in diverse natural communities containing a variety of plant and animal species. Diverse plant and animal communities tend to be more resilient and ecologically stable. Modifying these systems can lead, to unknown and undesirable consequences, if not done thoughtfully based on sound scientific principles.

We all realize that farming, ranching, mining, and a host of other human activities can affect biodiversity. While we can no sooner abandon farming and commodity production than stop breathing, our programs can be designed to maintain biodiversity as well as produce such things as timber, crops, and livestock. Experience teaches us that the most practical way to accomplish this is to attend first to the land, and to take a more holistic approach in managing the land and resources it supports.

How we use the land affects biological resources and important habitats and ecosystems in many ways. Over time, many land use activities can damage the value of soil and water resources. For example, monoculture farming (growing the same crop on a large acreage in the same field year after year) sharply reduces the diversity of plant cover. It reduces landscape diversity and may eliminate winter cover, nesting areas, and food plants for many wildlife species. Draining wetlands to grow crops can reduce breeding areas for waterfowl and other

wildlife. Overgrazing results in less food and cover for wildlife, which must then compete more intensely with each other and with domestic livestock for the food and cover that remains. These same practices contribute to increased flooding and sedimentation, poorer water quality, degradation of fish habitat, and loss of the soil's productive capacity.

As we are all aware, nature does not recognize political or jurisdictional boundaries. This is but one reason why it is so important to have the various Federal agencies singing from the same hymnal. In addition, it points to the need to establish cooperative relationships with state and private land owners.

USDA Leadership in Conservation

The USDA has a long and proud tradition in leadership in conservation and forestry and we will continue to play a central role in the future.

We are beginning to realize the importance of protecting biodiversity across the landscape and on a watershed basis.

The Soil Conservation Service has an important role to play in improving management of ecosystems and biodiversity. As a source of technical support to farmers, ranchers and others, SCS provides leadership in tackling tough issues like nonpoint source pollution, wetland protection, and watershed restoration and management mainly on non-Federal, agricultural lands. Land users work with nearly 3,000 locally organized and locally run conservation districts in the United States. This delivery system and the traditional role of providing assistance to private land users makes SCS a key to fostering the Nation's efforts to conserve biological resources and important habitats on private lands.

The Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service programs provide substantial cost-share and other financial incentives to aid farmers in making land and water conservation investments. Through the Conservation Reserve Program, ASCS has helped farmers protect over 35 million acres of highly erodible and other environmentally sensitive cropland. Seventy-five percent of the 50,000 acres approved for restoration in the first year of the Wetlands Reserve Program are in endangered species recovery plans, will directly benefit endangered species, or lie within ongoing Federal or State wildlife project areas.

In addition, the natural resource program of the Extension Service has provided valuable information and assistance to thousands of farmers, ranchers, and woodland owners to guide them in making environmentally-sound management decisions.

The Forest Service has a wealth of resources and expertise to bring to bear on matters related to the conservation of biodiversity within the United States and internationally.

The Forest Service remains the only Federal land resource agency with a clear mandate to manage its lands to conserve biological diversity. The National Forest Management Act of 1976 requires the Forest Service to " ... provide for diversity of plant and animal communities based on sustainability and capability of the specific land area."

Fully half of the Nation's softwood timber, big game, and cold water fisheries originate on National Forest lands. Over 75 percent of the water in the West has its source on National Forest land. And just under one-third of the currently listed threatened and endangered animals and plants are located on National Forest lands.

Just last year, Forest Service Chief Dale Robertson announced the Agency's commitment to ecosystem management. With this approach we intend to apply scientific knowledge of the way in which all of the important components of the ecosystem fit together to better guide resource management.

One example of the Forest Service's effort is the sensitive species program entitled "Every Species Counts." This is a proactive management effort to head off the need for future threatened and endangered listings. The program provides the foundation upon which to build an ecosystem approach to evaluating habitats that may be at risk, and to ensure that management activities do not allow a decline in the habitat of identified species. Our ecosystem approach might be likened to "preventive medicine," rather than intensive care treatment of a patient in critical condition.

The research program of the Forest Service is particularly key in maintaining diverse ecosystems across the United States and abroad. It also illustrates one of the strengths that we can bring to the new Federal conservation partnership. Knowledge is critical to success in managing our natural resources. Forest Service research provides that knowledge for many Federal and State agencies engaged in managing and protecting healthy ecosystems.

In addition, the International Forestry Program is rapidly becoming the world leader in providing scientific and technical support for international resource management programs.

Improving USDA's Conservation and Forestry Programs

As part of our effort, we must commit the resources needed to monitor our actions and to measure our progress over time. Strategies like ecosystem management and watershed planning are for the long term. We must establish the capability to accomplish what we set out to do, and take corrective measures when it appears that we have strayed off course. Benchmarks to measure our progress are also needed in this period of fiscal restraint to make sure the American taxpayer is getting the biggest bang for the buck.

But the truth is, our knowledge of ecosystem functions is still quite limited. Even the best scientific research is often not much more than interim conclusions drawn from incomplete data, and the scientists will tell you that.

This points out the need for intensive research and monitoring. It also points out why management must be sufficiently flexible to be able to change as our scientific information changes. To this end, we must strengthen the link between research and management so that our policies have a strong scientific foundation.

Another concept that should guide our conservation and forestry programs is the concept of sustainability. Management strategies--be they for agricultural land or forests--can only be effective if they lead to sustainable production of the goods and services which the land provides. Sustainable production, in turn, can provide the basis for sustaining the economies of rural communities and provide them with a more certain future.

The Forest Service has played an active role in developing the science and maintaining the conservation of biodiversity at a regional, national, and international level. Our participation began with the 1989 Keystone Dialogue which heightened national attention to biodiversity. From there, the Forest Service chaired the 1992 International Sacramento Conference on Biodiversity in Managed Landscapes and is currently editing the conference proceedings. Also in 1992, the Forest Service represented the Department of Agriculture in preparing for the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. As a followup to these efforts, the Forest Service will hold an agencywide workshop to identify strengths and limitations for conducting research and managing for biodiversity.

Summary

In closing, let me say that I am committed to a new partnership among the Federal agencies to conserve our biological resources. The strength of a good partnership comes from the individual strengths that each member brings to that partnership. I believe USDA brings many strengths to this new conservation partnership and has the capability to move aggressively to deal with many of the natural resource and environmental problems facing our Nation in concert with the Department of the Interior, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Marine Fisheries Services in the Department of Commerce.

We must seek balanced solutions to the complex natural resource management issues facing us. We have the resources, the professional expertise, and the will to get the job done. Let's move forward and do it.



News Releases-

Release No. 0229.93

Barbara Anderson (202) 205-1576

Rob Mrowka (202) 205-1752

Edwin Moffett (202) 720-4026

FOREST SERVICE TAKING STEPS TO CONSERVE THE DECLINING BUTTERNUT TREE

WASHINGTON, March 29--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service is working with a coalition of state governments, conservation organizations and woodcrafters to help assure the health of butternut trees, now in severe decline in eastern United States because of a devastating non-native canker disease.

"The joint effort includes extensive genetics research on disease resistant trees, a harvest ban on healthy butternut trees in national forests, and formation of a team to implement voluntary conservation measures at all levels and ownerships," said Forest Service Chief F. Dale Robertson.

The coalition's aim is to restore butternut throughout its range and promote healthy regeneration. The disease has been found from Minnesota to Maine, and south to Arkansas and the Carolinas. The harvest restriction is expected to remain in place on national forests until a disease-resistant strain of butternut can be identified and propagated.

In a recent Forest Service report on the health of forests in the northeast, the butternut was identified as at risk in urban and rural areas.

Butternut is important for biodiversity of the forest. As a commodity wood, it is a favorite of wood carvers and has been used for furniture, fine woodwork and paneling.

The American chestnut, once the most common eastern hardwood, also was decimated by a non-native disease introduced earlier in the century. It is hoped that the coordinated effort can save the butternut from a similar fate.

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EDITORS NOTE: Copies of the Northeastern Area Forest Health Report are available by contacting: Forest Service, USDA, Northeastern Area, Gerald Hertel, 5 Randor Corporate Center, 100 Matsonford Rd., Suite 200, Randor, Pa. 19087-4585; telephone, (215) 975-4125.

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Release No. 0230.93

Sean Adams (301) 344-2723

Leslie Parker (202) 720-4026

GIBBERELIC ACID EYED AS FRUIT FLY DETERRENT IN CITRUS

WASHINGTON, March 29--A natural plant hormone sprayed on citrus makes the peel stay green even though the fruit inside is ripe. That tricks female fruit flies into bypassing these fruit as a place in which to lay their eggs, U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists report.

The hormone, gibberellic acid (GA), slows the aging and softening of citrus peels, making them less appealing to female fruit flies searching for yellow grapefruit and orange oranges, said USDA entomologist Patrick D. Greany in a report at this year's national meeting of the American Chemical Society in Denver, Colo. The report outlines the potential of GA as a new technology for managing fruit fly populations.

GA-treated citrus peels also resist fruit fly attacks because the peels are harder for egg-laying females to penetrate, said Greany of USDA's Agricultural Research Service in Gainesville, Fla. If the female does penetrate the peel and lay eggs, he said, peel oils and other chemicals that are naturally toxic to insects kill most larvae before they reach the pulp.

The GA treatment--now under consideration by the Florida industry--could provide citrus growers with another tool to help protect their \$100 to \$200 million-a-year export crop, said Greany.

Although green on the outside, citrus sprayed with GA is fully ripe on the inside and ready for juicing or eating. GA has no adverse effect on internal ripening. To make the GA-treated fruit appealing for fresh market sale, it can be exposed to ethylene gas to change the peel color from green to orange or yellow, Greany said.

"If approved for use in Florida, gibberellic acid would provide another tool for use in conjunction with other control measures in fly-free zones," said Greany. He and researchers at three other ARS locations are looking at several ways of using GA against Caribbean, Mediterranean, Mexican and Queensland fruit flies.

GA occurs naturally in growing plants and is commercially derived from a fungus called *Gibberella fujikuroi*. GA produced by Abbott Laboratories, has been safely used for more than 30 years to regulate the growth of citrus and about three dozen other crops, including grapes, rice and spinach.

Citrus growers now use GA to extend the harvest season and to improve shipping quality, because it keeps the peel tough and resistant to postharvest molds and mechanical injury. But it is not yet certified for controlling fruit flies, Greany said.

In field studies, he and colleagues found that spraying GA on citrus trees just before the fruit turns from green to orange or yellow can extend by at least two months the fruit's inherent resistance to fruit flies. In Florida, this color change, called colorbreak, occurs around September in untreated fruit.

Other ARS researchers involved in GA research are chemist Philip E. Shaw at the Citrus and Subtropical Products Research Lab in Winter Haven, Fla., and horticulturalist Roy E. McDonald and entomologist William J. Schroeder of the U.S. Horticultural Research Lab in Orlando, Fla.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: For details, contact Patrick D. Greany, USDA, ARS Insect Attractants, Behavior, & Basic Biology Laboratory, Gainesville, Fla. 32604, telephone (904) 374-5763; Philip E. Shaw, USDA, ARS Citrus & Subtropical Research Laboratory, Winter Haven, Fla. 33880, telephone (813) 293-4133; Roy E. McDonald and William J. Schroeder, USDA, ARS U.S. Horticultural Research Laboratory, Orlando, Fla. 32803, telephone (407) 897-7324.

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Release No. 0231.93
Dennis Senft (510) 559-6068
Leslie Parker (202) 720-4026

WEED IN WINTER WHEAT REDUCED 80 PERCENT

WASHINGTON, March 30--Wheat farmers in the west can use an old solution, crop rotation, to stifle a relatively new weed, goatgrass, U.S. Department of Agriculture scientists said.

In a study in Colorado, "switching from winter wheat to corn, sorghum or sunflower for two years reduced the number of jointed goatgrass weeds by 80 percent," said Randy L. Anderson with USDA's Agricultural Research Service. "We're confident that adding a third year of summer crops will reduce weed numbers even further."

Commercial herbicides that kill goatgrass also kill wheat. But crop rotation, one of the oldest methods of sustainable agriculture, helps keep soil fertile and hold down weeds and insect pests and soil diseases to tolerable levels, said Anderson, an agronomist at ARS' Central Great Plains Experiment Station in Akron, Colo.

The weed wasn't much of a problem in wheat until about 1980. But it now infests about 3.5 million acres of winter wheat in the midwest and Pacific northwest, and has cut yields as much as 25 percent in badly infested fields, he said.

"Some growers have so many goatgrass weeds that their only solution now is to mow the fields for hay. That nets only about a third of the income of a wheat crop not plagued by weeds, but it's a good way to start using crop rotation to stifle the problem," said Anderson.

Goatgrass seeds harvested along with the wheat end up being milled with the wheat into flour, he said. This reduces the flour's bread-making quality and limits wheat export opportunities--especially to Asian markets. "Jointed goatgrass has infested between 5 and 10 percent of the winter wheat acreage in Colorado. Most western wheat growing areas probably have similar infestations," Anderson said.

Washington State is particularly hard-hit, with about 25 percent of winter wheat acreage infested by goatgrass, said Alex G. Ogg, Jr., ARS plant physiologist at Pullman, Wash.

Ogg said his studies at ARS' Nonirrigated Agricultural Weed Science Research Unit indicate that three spring-planted crops are needed where wheat fields have severe goatgrass infestations. He recommends that Washington, Idaho and Oregon growers plant spring wheat, barley, canola, peas or lentils in rotation with winter wheat.

Anderson said growers have a couple of options for getting rid of goatgrass that remains after they harvest their summer-annual crop. They can control it by cultivation, or spray it with herbicide in the fall. They can also apply herbicide in spring before planting one of the summer crops.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: For details, contact Randy L. Anderson, agronomist, Central Great Plains Research Station, USDA, ARS, Akron, Colo. 80720-0400, telephone (303) 345-2259; and Alex G. Ogg, Jr., plant physiologist, Nonirrigated Agricultural Weed Science Research Unit, USDA, ARS, Pullman, Wash. 99164-6421, telephone (509) 335-1551.

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Release No. 0232.93

Brian L. Hasser (202) 720-6701

Phil Villa-Lobos (202) 720-4026

FORMER USDA EMPLOYEE CHARGED WITH EXTORTION AND TAX EVASION

WASHINGTON, March 30 -- A Greensboro, North Carolina federal grand jury late yesterday returned a two count indictment charging a former U.S. Department of Agriculture employee with extortion and filing a false tax return.

USDA's Acting Inspector General Charles Gillum said the indictment charged James William York, 62, while he was deputy director, Tobacco and Peanut Division, Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, Washington, D.C., with extorting a mobile home worth approximately \$17,000 from a Johnson City, Tennessee tobacco warehouseman. The indictment also charged York with filing a false tax return for 1991 by omitting substantial income received from extortion.

York, currently residing in Falls Church, Virginia, was a USDA employee for 19 years until his retirement on Oct. 24, 1992.

The indictment was the result of an investigation by USDA's Office of Inspector General and the Internal Revenue Service. The U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of North Carolina is prosecuting the case. If convicted, York could be sentenced to a term of up to 23 years imprisonment and a fine of \$500,000.

Gillum said the indictment represents one of a number of cases coming to fruition involving the tobacco industry.

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Release No. 0233.93
 Gene Rosera (202) 720-6734
 Charles Hobbs (202) 720-4026

USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET RICE PRICES

WASHINGTON, March 30--Acting Under Secretary of Agriculture Charles J. O'Mara today announced the prevailing world market prices of milled rice, loan rate basis, as follows:

- long grain whole kernels, 7.72 cents per pound;
- medium grain whole kernels, 6.90 cents per pound;
- short grain whole kernels, 6.89 cents per pound;
- broken kernels, 3.86 cents per pound.

Based upon these prevailing world market prices for milled rice, loan deficiency payment rates and gains from repaying price support loans at the world market price level are:

- for long grain, \$1.90 per hundredweight;
- for medium grain, \$1.79 per hundredweight;
- for short grain, \$1.79 per hundredweight.

The prices announced are effective today at 3 p.m. EST. The next scheduled price announcement will be made April 6 at 3 p.m. EDT.



Release No. 0234.93
 Marcie Gerrietts (309) 681-6534
 Leslie Parker (202) 720-4026

HAMMOCK REDUCES DAMAGE WHEN LOADING HARVESTED PRODUCE

WASHINGTON, March 31--A U.S. Department of Agriculture scientist has put a hammock to work protecting the quality of fresh produce.

At harvest, vegetables such as carrots, cucumbers, onions and potatoes are dumped into a high-lift or semi-truck trailer. As the first loads are dropped, they can fall five to eight feet before hitting the empty trailer bed.

"The most damage occurs to the first six to eight inches of the crop that hit the bare steel bottom of a trailer," said Dale E. Marshall, an agricultural engineer with USDA's Agricultural Research Service at East Lansing, Mich.

Marshall devised a reinforced vinyl hammock that fits inside the trailer to break the vegetables' fall. Attached to straps, the hammock hangs two to three feet above the trailer bed, providing a softer surface for the landing as well as shortening the fall.

Marshall said tests on Michigan farms showed the number of damaged carrots and onions in the first six to eight inches was reduced by two-thirds when dropped in a hammock-protected trailer. Damage to cucumbers and potatoes was lowered 50 percent.

"These hammocks have a lot going for them," Marshall said. "They're effective, basically inexpensive, easy to remove and repairable."

Marshall's inspiration for the hammock came after a trip to Scandinavia in August 1991, where he learned of a similar system used in Holland. He has worked with the Orion Corp. of Sarasota, Fla., to design a hammock that will provide the greatest damage reduction.

Marshall said he's optimistic that several variations of the hammock designs will be commercially available to vegetable growers within the next one to two years.

A report on Marshall's work appears in the March issue of Agricultural Research magazine, the monthly publication of the Agricultural Research Service.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: For details, contact Dale Marshall, Fruit and Vegetable Harvesting Research Unit, USDA, ARS, East Lansing, Mich. 48824. Telephone (517) 353-5201.



Release No. 0235.93
Robert Feist (202) 720-6789
Phil Villa-Lobos (202) 720-4026

USDA RELEASES SWEETENER MARKET DATA REPORT FOR JANUARY 1993

WASHINGTON, March 31--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation today released its Sweetener Market Data report for January 1993.

Report totals, in short tons (2,000 pounds), include:

- Jan. 1, 1993 sugar stocks - 3,219,472.
- U.S. beet sugar production for January 1993 - 569,451.
- U.S. cane sugar production for January 1993 - 322,136.
- Deliveries for January 1993 - 634,111, including deliveries for domestic human consumption - 617,761.
- Feb. 1, 1993 sugar stocks - 3,668,142.

Copies of the March 26, 1993 Sweetener Market Data report for January data are available from the Sweeteners Analysis Division, ASCS/USDA, Room 3727-S, P.O. Box 2415, Washington, D.C. 20013; telephone (202) 720-3391; FAX (202) 720-8261.



Release No. 0236.93
Cynthia A. Eck (301) 436-5931
Edwin Moffett (202) 720-4026

USDA ADDS OPTIONS TO FIELD TEST REGULATIONS

WASHINGTON, March 31--The U.S. Department of Agriculture today issued final rules amending the steps needed to field-test certain plants developed through biotechnology. The new rules take effect April 30.

"Under the new system, two additional options, a notification process and a petition process, are now available for field-testing certain genetically engineered plants," said John Payne, acting director of biotechnology, biologics, and environmental protection (BBEP) in USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

Payne said the petition process allows biotechnology producers to provide APHIS with scientific documentation so the agency can determine if it is necessary to continue regulating the genetically modified plant. Once APHIS determines there is no plant pest risk, further approval for field tests will not be needed.

The notification procedure allows biotechnology producers to inform APHIS that field tests will begin in 30 days or that interstate movement of genetically modified plants will take place in 10 days. The notification, sent to the deputy director of BBEP, must certify that all other requirements are being met. APHIS will then notify state government officials of the field tests and provide notice to the public.

Other modified plants and organisms not subject to notification are still subject to the current permit process.

"The new notification system modifies regulatory review for field tests and still ensures the safety of the field tests. We have based the new system on our experience in reviewing over 350 field tests in five and a half years," Payne said.

The following plant species are eligible for introduction through the notification procedure: corn, cotton, potato, soybean, tobacco or tomato. The crop species also must meet other eligibility and performance standards assuring APHIS that there is no harm to agriculture and the environment.

The rule change was proposed in the Nov. 6, 1992, Federal Register and elicited 84 comments. The comments were taken into account in preparing the final version, which published in today's Federal Register.



Release No. 0237.93
 Robert Feist (202) 720-6789
 Phil Villa-Lobos (202) 720-4026

INTEREST RATE FOR APRIL 3-3/8 PERCENT

WASHINGTON, April 1--Commodity loans disbursed in April by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Commodity Credit Corporation will carry a 3-3/8 percent interest rate, according to Randy Weber, acting executive vice president of the CCC.

The 3-3/8 percent interest rate is unchanged from March's 3-3/8 percent and reflects the interest rate charged CCC by the U.S. Treasury in April.



Release No. 0239.93
 Janise Zygmunt (202) 720-6734
 Leslie Parker (202) 720-4026

USDA ANNOUNCES PREVAILING WORLD MARKET PRICE AND USER MARKETING CERTIFICATE PAYMENT RATE FOR UPLAND COTTON

WASHINGTON, April 1--Randy Weber, acting executive vice president of USDA's Commodity Credit Corporation, today announced the prevailing world market price, adjusted to U.S. quality and location (adjusted world price), for Strict Low Middling (SLM) 1-1/16 inch (micronaire 3.5-3.6 and 4.3-4.9, strength 24-25 grams per tex) upland cotton (base quality) and the coarse count adjustment (CCA) in effect from 5:00 p.m. today through 3:59 p.m. Thursday, April 8. The user marketing certificate payment rate announced today is in effect from 12:01 a.m. Friday, April 2, through midnight Thursday, April 8.

The Agricultural Act of 1949, as amended, provides that the AWP may be further adjusted if: (a) the AWP is less than 115 percent of the current crop year loan rate for base quality upland cotton, and (b) the Friday through Thursday average price quotation for the lowest-priced U.S. growth as quoted for Middling (M) 1-3/32 inch cotton, C.I.F. northern Europe (USNE price) exceeds the Northern Europe (NE) price. The maximum allowable adjustment is the difference between the USNE price and the NE price.

A further adjustment to this week's calculated AWP may be made in accordance with this provision. The calculated AWP is 90 percent of the 1992 upland cotton base quality loan rate, and the USNE price exceeds the NE price by 2.40 cents per pound.

Following are the relevant calculations:

I.	Calculated AWP	47.17 cents per pound
	1992 Base Loan Rate	52.35 cents per pound
	AWP as a Percent of Loan Rate	90
II.	USNE Price	63.25 cents per pound
	NE Price	-60.85 cents per pound
	Maximum Adjustment Allowed	2.40 cents per pound

Based on a consideration of the U.S. share of world exports, the current level of cotton export sales and cotton export shipments, and other relevant data, no further adjustment to this week's calculated AWP will be made.

This week's AWP and coarse count adjustment are determined as follows:

Adjusted World Price

NE Price	60.85
Adjustments:	
Average U.S. spot market location	11.82
SLM 1-1/16 inch cotton	1.55
Average U.S. location	0.31
Sum of Adjustments	- 13.68
Calculated AWP	47.17
Further AWP adjustment	- 0
ADJUSTED WORLD PRICE	47.17 cents/lb.

Coarse Count Adjustment

NE Price	60.85
NE Coarse Count Price	- 57.52
	3.33
Adjustment to SLM 1-1/32 inch cotton	- 3.95
	- 0.62
COARSE COUNT ADJUSTMENT.....	0 cents/lb.

Because the AWP is below the 1991 and 1992 base quality loan rates of 50.77 and 52.35 cents per pound, respectively, the loan repayment rate during this period is equal to the AWP, adjusted for the specific quality and location plus applicable interest and storage charges. The AWP will continue to be used to determine the value of upland cotton that is obtained in exchange for commodity certificates.

Because the AWP is below the 1992-crop loan rate, cash loan deficiency payments will be paid to eligible producers who agree to forgo obtaining a price support loan with respect to the 1992 crop. The payment rate is equal to the difference between the loan rate and the AWP. Producers are allowed to obtain a loan deficiency payment on a bale-by-bale basis.

This week marks the beginning of the 3-week spring transition period during which consecutive 4-week Friday-through-Thursday periods contain a combination of Northern Europe price quotations only for 1 to 3 weeks and both Northern Europe current shipment prices and Northern Europe forward shipment prices only for 1 to 3 weeks. During this spring transition period, the user marketing certificate payment rate is based on the difference in the fourth week between the USNE current price and the NE current price, minus 1.25 cents. The payment is applicable during the Friday through Thursday period for bales opened by domestic users and for cotton contracts entered into by exporters for delivery prior to Sept. 30.

The USNE price has exceeded the NE price by more than 1.25 cents per pound for four consecutive weeks and the AWP has not exceeded 130 percent of the 1992 crop year base quality loan rate in any week of the 4-week period. As a result, the user marketing certificate payment rate is 1.15 cents per pound. Relevant data are summarized below:

Week	For the Friday through Thursday Period Ending	USNE Price	NE Price	USNE Minus NE	User Certificate Payment Rate 1/
			cents per pound		
1	Mar. 11, 1993	65.25	61.71	3.54	2.29
2	Mar. 18, 1993	65.40	61.90	3.50	2.25
3	Mar. 25, 1993	63.20	61.08	2.12	0.87
4	Apr. 1, 1993	63.25 (c)	60.85 (c)	2.40	1.15

1/ USNE price minus NE price minus 1.25 cents.

(c) Based on current price quotations.

Next week's AWP, CCA and user marketing certificate payment rate will be announced on Thursday, April 8.

Release No. 0240.93
 Robin Porter (301) 436-6573
 Edwin Moffett (301) 436-3257

USDA WILDLIFE AGENCY HELPS KEEP THE SYRUP FLOWING IN VERMONT

WASHINGTON, April 1--Even squirrels have a taste for maple syrup. That's why the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service is helping Vermont maple syrup producers manage squirrels and other wild animals in the sugar bush during this year's multi-million dollar harvest.

APHIS' Animal Damage Control (ADC) program is expected to provide technical assistance to some of Vermont's 2,500 producers during the March-April maple syrup season.

"Although horse-drawn sleighs and buckets can still be found throughout maple syrup country, many producers are using new technology to collect gallons of sap," said Bobby Acord, deputy administrator for ADC.

"Producers report that using plastic tubing to gather sap can significantly increase yields, but it may also attract the attention of wild animals," Acord said.

Rodents--especially squirrels and chipmunks--and woodpeckers are responsible for more than \$300,000 in damage to the maple syrup industry each year. Deer, porcupines, coyotes and bears have all displayed their sweet teeth, now and again chewing, gnawing and pulling at spouts, plastic tubing and fittings--although damage from these animals is less common.

Damage also is caused by moose as they journey through the sugar bush. These animals seem to have a knack for knocking down some of the state's thousands of miles of maple tubing which is used to gather sap and deliver it to sugar houses for boiling into syrup.

Besides being attracted to the sweetness of the sap, animals may be attracted to the tubing itself.

"Our goal is to provide producers with effective and safe solutions to these problems," Acord said. "ADC wildlife biologists, in cooperation with state agriculture officials, producers, and the University of Vermont's Proctor Maple Research Center are investigating several methods to reduce the damage caused by wildlife."

Two of the recommended methods include removing vulnerable areas of the tubing after the season; and covering tubing and spouts with wire and metal shields.

ADC also suggests the use of alternative rinsing solutions to reduce or eliminate the attractive residue on tubing.

Acord said ADC is continuing to field-test other effective and humane methods to reduce wildlife damage in the sugar bush.

For more information about ADC's involvement in assisting maple producers, call Richard Chipman, ADC wildlife biologist, at (802) 828-4467.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: *Black-and-white glossy prints of the photo are available from Photography Division, Room 4404-S, Office of Public Affairs, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250; telephone (202) 720-6633. Request by negative number.*

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Release No. 0241.93
 Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623

ESPY AIMS AT BIODIVERSITY AND TEAM APPROACH IN CONSERVATION

WASHINGTON, April 1--Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy today told members of congress the U.S. Department of Agriculture will be working closely in tandem with the U.S. Departments of

Interior and Commerce and the Environmental Protection Agency to coordinate programs designed to maintain biodiversity.

"While we can no sooner abandon farming and commodity production than stop breathing, our programs can be designed to maintain biodiversity as well as produce such things as timber, crops and livestock," Espy said before the House Committee on Merchant Marine and Fisheries.

Espy said biodiversity is one of the most important issues in natural resource management, and effective approaches must maximize plant and animal diversity to maintain ecological resilience and stability.

He said the most effective way to conserve our resources and produce the needed goods is "to attend first to the land, and to take a more holistic approach in managing the land and resources it supports."

Pointing to the broad effects of USDA's programs on the conservation stewardship of national forest land, range and cropland, Espy emphasized teamwork among the principal players.

"Nature does not recognize political or jurisdictional boundaries," he said. "This is but one reason why it is so important to have the various federal agencies singing from the same hymnal. In addition it points to the need to establish cooperative relationships with state and private land owners."

In order to evaluate conservation efforts and take corrective measures, Espy said the federal government "must commit the resources needed to monitor our actions and measure our progress over time."

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Full text of Espy's remarks (release #0238.93) are available from the News Division, Office of Public Affairs, USDA, Room 404-A, Washington, D.C., 20250; telephone (202) 720-4026.

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Release No. 0242.93

Steve Kinsella (202) 720-4623

Ron Hall (202) 720-5747

ALI WEBB NAMED TO PUBLIC AFFAIRS POST AT USDA

WASHINGTON, April 1--Ali Webb has been named director of public affairs at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Secretary of Agriculture Mike Espy announced today. Previously, the duties of public affairs director and press secretary were the responsibility of one person. Those positions have now been separated and will be held by two different individuals.

In the post of public affairs director, Webb will be responsible for USDA's communications, public liaison, and intergovernmental affairs operations.

"Ali Webb brings a wealth of experience to this Department as a working press secretary and as a former print reporter," Espy said. "I'll be relying on her to provide solid direction to USDA's communications efforts as we make sure the message we send to our constituents is consistent, coordinated, and customer-friendly."

Before joining USDA, Webb had served since September 1989 as associate director for the League of Conservation Voters, a non-profit, non-partisan national environmental political action group based in Washington, D.C. In that position she managed the organization's nationwide political and communications program and edited such publications as "Vote for the Earth, the League of Conservation Voters' Guide to the Election."

From 1988-89 Webb worked as a research fellow and teaching assistant at the Barone Center for Press, Politics and Public Policy at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government at Cambridge, Mass. She also taught a course on political communication at Emerson College in Boston during 1989.

From 1987-88 Webb served as the national press secretary for the "Dick Gephardt for President" campaign. She worked as press secretary for Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley from 1980-87, and was press secretary for the "Bradley for Governor" campaign during 1986. During 1984 she served as the California press secretary for the "Walter Mondale for President" campaign. She worked as a reporter for the "Eagle," a daily newspaper serving central Texas, during 1979.

A native of South Pasadena, Calif., Webb holds a B.A. degree in journalism from Stanford University in Standford, Calif., and a master of public administration degree from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.



Release No. 0243.93

Dianne Odland (301) 436-8617

Charles Hobbs (202) 720-4026

USDA RELEASES COST OF FOOD AT HOME FOR FEBRUARY

WASHINGTON, April 1--Here is the U.S. Department of Agriculture's monthly update of the weekly cost of food at home for February 1993:

COST OF FOOD AT HOME FOR A WEEK IN FEBRUARY 1993

	----- Food plans -----			
	Thrifty	Low-cost	Moderate-cost	Liberal
	(in dollars)			
Families:				
Family of 2 (20-50 years)	50.30	63.60	78.40	97.70
Family of 2 (51 years and over)	47.50	61.10	75.30	90.20
Family of 4 with preschool children	73.10	91.60	111.90	137.70
Family of 4 with elementary schoolchildren	83.80	107.60	134.40	162.10
Individuals in four-person families:				
Children:				
1-2 years	13.20	16.20	18.90	22.90
3-5 years	14.20	17.60	21.70	26.00
6-8 years	17.40	23.30	29.10	34.00
9-11 years	20.70	26.50	34.00	39.30
Males:				
12-14 years	21.60	30.00	37.40	43.90
15-19 years	22.30	31.00	38.50	44.60
20-50 years	24.00	30.80	38.40	46.60
51 and over	21.70	29.20	36.00	43.20
Females:				
12-19 years	21.70	26.00	31.50	38.10
20-50 years	21.70	27.00	32.90	42.20
51 and over	21.50	26.30	32.50	38.80

USDA's Human Nutrition Information Service computes the cost of food at home for four food plans -- thrifty, low-cost, moderate-cost, and liberal.

David Rust, HNIS acting administrator, said the plans consist of foods that provide well-balanced meals and snacks for a week.

In computing the costs, USDA assumes all food is bought at the store and prepared at home. Costs do not include alcoholic beverages, pet food, soap, cigarettes, paper goods and other nonfood items bought at the store.

"USDA costs are only guides to spending," Rust said. "Families may spend more or less, depending on such factors as where they buy their food, how carefully they plan and buy, whether some food is produced at home, what foods the family likes, and how much food is prepared at home."

"Most families will find the moderate-cost or low-cost plan suitable," he said. "The thrifty plan, which USDA uses to set the coupon allotment in the food stamp program, is for families who have tighter budgets. Families with unlimited resources might use the liberal plan."

To use the chart to estimate your family's food costs:

-- For members eating all meals at home -- or carried from home -- use the amounts shown in the chart.

-- For members eating some meals out, deduct 5 percent for each meal eaten away from home from the amount shown for the appropriate family member. Thus, for a person eating lunch out 5 days a week, subtract 25 percent, or one-fourth the cost shown.

-- For guests, add 5 percent of the amount shown for the proper age group for each meal.

Costs in the second part of the chart pertain to individuals in four-person families. If your family has more or less than four, total the "individual" figures and make these adjustments (note: larger families tend to buy and use food more economically than smaller ones):

-- For a one-person family, add 20 percent.

-- For a two-person family, add 10 percent.

-- For a three-person family, add 5 percent.

-- For a five- or six-person family, subtract 5 percent.

-- For a family of seven or more, subtract 10 percent.

Details of the four family food plans are available from the Nutrition Education Division, HNIS, USDA, Federal Building, Hyattsville, Md. 20782.



Release No. 0244.93

Kendra Pratt (301) 436-4898

Arthur Whitmore (202) 720-4026

USDA EXPANDS ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS OF ANIMAL HEALTH PROGRAMS

WASHINGTON, April 1--The U.S. Department of Agriculture today expanded the list of potential issues to be analyzed in an environmental impact statement for animal disease eradication activities.

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service asked the public in October 1992 to help identify issues involved with disease eradication that could fall under the National Environmental Policy Act. (See USDA press release No. 0949.92.)

"The comments we received prompted us to expand the scope of the environmental analysis to the laboratory and operational aspects of our program," said Billy G. Johnson, deputy administrator of APHIS' veterinary services program.

The environmental impact statement will take an overall look at important environmental issues that may surface during essential program actions. In order to comply with all applicable federal statutes, APHIS will consider the following disease-control issues in the analysis: pesticides used to control potential sources of disease; chemicals used for sanitation; and disposal of carcasses and contaminated manure and debris.

Johnson said veterinary services is responsible for protecting livestock and poultry from certain diseases. The program helps reduce the risk of diseases entering the country or spreading from state to state. Trained veterinarians also help eliminate certain animal diseases through surveillance, prevention and control measures.

The announcement of expanded considerations was published in the March 29 Federal Register.



